

30-3-10.9 Parenting plan -- Objectives -- Required provisions -- Dispute resolution.

- (1) The objectives of a parenting plan are to:
 - (a) provide for the child's physical care;
 - (b) maintain the child's emotional stability;
 - (c) provide for the child's changing needs as the child grows and matures in a way that minimizes the need for future modifications to the parenting plan;
 - (d) set forth the authority and responsibilities of each parent with respect to the child consistent with the definitions outlined in this chapter;
 - (e) minimize the child's exposure to harmful parental conflict;
 - (f) encourage the parents, where appropriate, to meet the responsibilities to their minor children through agreements in the parenting plan rather than relying on judicial intervention; and
 - (g) protect the best interests of the child.
- (2) The parenting plan shall contain provisions for resolution of future disputes between the parents, allocation of decision-making authority, and residential provisions for the child, and provisions addressing notice and parent-time responsibilities in the event of the relocation of either party. It may contain other provisions comparable to those in Sections 30-3-5 and 30-3-10.3 regarding the welfare of the child.
- (3) A process for resolving disputes shall be provided unless precluded or limited by statute. A dispute resolution process may include:
 - (a) counseling;
 - (b) mediation or arbitration by a specified individual or agency; or
 - (c) court action.
- (4) In the dispute resolution process:
 - (a) preference shall be given to the provisions in the parenting plan;
 - (b) parents shall use the designated process to resolve disputes relating to implementation of the plan, except those related to financial support, unless an emergency exists;
 - (c) a written record shall be prepared of any agreement reached in counseling or mediation and provided to each party;
 - (d) if arbitration becomes necessary, a written record shall be prepared and a copy of the arbitration award shall be provided to each party;
 - (e) if the court finds that a parent has used or frustrated the dispute resolution process without good reason, the court may award attorney's fees and financial sanctions to the prevailing parent;
 - (f) the district court shall have the right of review from the dispute resolution process; and
 - (g) the provisions of this Subsection (4) shall be set forth in any final decree or order.
- (5) The parenting plan shall allocate decision-making authority to one or both parties regarding the children's education, health care, and religious upbringing. The parties may incorporate an agreement related to the care and growth of the children in these specified areas or in other areas into their plan, consistent with the criteria outlined in Subsection 30-3-10.7(2) and Subsection (1). Regardless of the allocation of decision-making in the parenting plan, either parent may make emergency decisions affecting the health or safety of the child.
- (6) Each parent may make decisions regarding the day-to-day care and control of the child while the child is residing with that parent.
- (7) When mutual decision-making is designated but cannot be achieved, the parties shall make a good faith effort to resolve the issue through the dispute resolution process.
- (8) The plan shall include a residential schedule which designates in which parent's home each minor child shall reside on given days of the year, including provisions for holidays, birthdays of family members, vacations, and other special occasions.

- (9) If a parent fails to comply with a provision of the parenting plan or a child support order, the other parent's obligations under the parenting plan or the child support order are not affected. Failure to comply with a provision of the parenting plan or a child support order may result in a finding of contempt of court.

Amended by Chapter 288, 2003 General Session